

## A PERIOD OF ARMED TRUCE

period of hesitation whether or not to establish a republic he overthrew the last Qajar sovereign and in 1925 proclaimed himself Shah-in-Shah of Iran. The Majlis confirmed this decision, and thus a new Pahlavi dynasty was founded.

As the new ruler of Iran, Reza Shah resembled in many ways his Turkish fellow-dictator, Mustapha Kemal Atatürk. Nationalism and westernization were two main points in the programs of both men. Reza Shah was resolved to put an end to whatever foreign influence might threaten the sovereignty of Iran. This meant a suspicious and guarded attitude toward Soviet Russia and Communist infiltration, as well as a challenging attitude toward Great Britain. With regard to westernization Reza did not go so far as his Turkish counterpart. While Kemal was uncompromising in some of his reforms, the sober-minded Reza realized that there was a line beyond which even an absolute ruler could not safely proceed. Iran was in many ways a much more isolated country than Turkey and had fewer western influences than her Ottoman neighbor. This produced a deeply ingrained conservatism in the masses of the population, and the influence of the Shia clergy tended to deepen it. It would be unsafe to be too radical, and the Iranian ruler rightly felt that there was a definite limit to the capacity of Orientals to absorb Western culture. Thus, while Kemal insisted on the word "secularism" for his new Turkey, Reza satisfied himself with only limited and gradual curbs on the influence of the clergy. While Kemal introduced the Latin script and revolutionized the whole fabric of education, Reza maintained the old Persian script. It was even said that

Reza refused to introduce the Western alphabet because of fear lest it facilitate the circulation of Communist literature. He did not hesitate, however, to order the unveiling of women and to introduce Western dress and headgear for men. Like Kemal, Reza established a system of controlled economy, investing government funds heavily in industrial and commercial enterprises and setting up, eventually, a government monopoly of foreign trade. Economically Reza wanted to make Iran self-sufficient while laying foundations for the development of local industry and transportation. American, and later German, advisers were invited to reorganize Iran's finances, and a national Bank